

- 2026 ELECTION PRIORITY -

New Emergency Department Bairnsdale Hospital

This project seeks urgent Victorian Government funding of approximately \$120 million to fund a new Emergency Department at the Bairnsdale Hospital as the first step toward full redevelopment.

Why a new ED is needed

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS) currently operates with limited Emergency Department (ED) beds. Modelling carried out by BRHS has outlined a need to:

- Uplift the number of treatment spaces
- Increase the capacity of the Short Stay Unit
- Grow resuscitation capacity

This uplift will ensure capacity is available to support efficient ED flow, safer operations, reduced ambulance ramping and improved turnaround times, and better discharge and patient flow.

Once completed, this project will directly improve healthcare access and safety for communities across East Gippsland, where thousands of residents rely on Bairnsdale Hospital each year.

The hospital's emergency department treats approximately 22,000 people annually and is inadequately sized to meet the growing community's emergency health care needs. Planning undertaken by Bairnsdale Regional Health Service has identified the need to expand current capacity to meet an expected demand of 30,000 people.

Our community is asking for

- \$120 million funding to design and deliver a new Emergency Department
- Complete a detailed design and contemporary masterplan
- Construction-ready business case
- Infrastructure build

Project readiness:

- Key service planning is complete
- Earlier master planning work is complete, so detailed planning and design can start now and support a staged redevelopment pathway (target start date 2027).

Background

The ED is too small for the number of people who need it, placing patient health and wellbeing at further unnecessary risk.



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The treatment spaces regularly operate beyond capacity, driven by local demand and a strong seasonal increase in visitors. This leads to overcrowding, longer waits and delays in urgent care, and adds pressure to ambulance turnaround times and inpatient services.

- From 25 December 2025 to 27 January 2026, the ED treated 2,412 people (71 a day on average).
- On peak days it sees more than 90 patients, including up to 25 ambulance arrivals.
- With only three ambulance bays, ramping averages four ambulances per day, contributing to longer waits and delays in urgent care.

Investing now in detailed planning and design is the quickest way to move toward a new Emergency Department and required to support our existing and growing population. It improves safety in the short term by setting clear requirements for capacity and patient flow, and it protects public money by providing firm scope, staging and costings before construction decisions are made.

Failure to progress this project will see demand further outstrip capacity. Infrastructure issues, including outdated layouts and inadequate treatment spaces, will persist - placing both patients and staff at risk. Without investment, overcrowding and delays will continue, increasing the risk of deferred care and poorer outcomes as the community grows and ages.

- More than 85% of presentations are from local residents.
- Demand rises when access to local admitting doctors and urgent care is limited in smaller, more remote communities
- Ageing population and a target of 11,000 new homes by 2051.

The project supports Victorian Government priorities to reduce pressure on emergency departments, cut ramping and strengthen regional health services.

More information

- Chief Executive Officer Fiona Weigall
 - 03 5153 9500 / 0427 539 509 fionaw@egipps.vic.gov.au
- Mayor Cr Jodie Ashworth
 - 03 5153 9500 / 0428 778 168 Cr.ashworth@egipps.vic.gov.au